

MBTI: How all Types May Team Effectively

Based on “Introduction to Type in Organizations” by Sandra Hirsh & Jean Kummerow

MBTI provides a practical method for understanding people, and therefore organizations, by looking at eight personality preferences that everyone uses at different times. These eight preferences are organized into four opposite pairs, and when you take the Indicator, the four preferences (one from each pair that you identify as being most like you) are combined into what is called a type.

Note: While many of you are familiar with typing, we are going to use this information to understand how we can type teams to function more effectively.

The four pairs of preferences, describe four activities:

- Energizing: how a person is energized, either Extraversion (E) or Introversion (I)
- Perceiving: what a person pays attention to, either Sensing (S) or Intuition (N)
- Deciding: how a person decides, either Thinking (T) or Feeling (F)
- Living: the lifestyle a person adopts, either Judging (J) or Perceiving (P)

Here are some characteristics of each of the four scales:

Energizing

Extraversion (E): Preference for drawing energy from the outside world of people, activities and things.

Introversion (I): Preference for drawing energy from one’s internal world of ideas, emotions and impressions.

Perceiving

Sensing (S): Preference for taking in information through the five senses and noticing what is actual.

Intuition (N): Preference for taking in information through a “sixth sense” and noting what might be.

Deciding

Thinking (T): Preference for organizing and structuring information to decide in a logical, objective way.

Feeling (F): Preference for organizing and structuring information to decide in a personal, values-oriented way.

Living

Judging (J): Preference for living and planned and organized life.

Perceiving (P): Preference for living a spontaneous and flexible life.

There are specific effects on preferences in work situations:

Extraversion:

- Like participating actively in a variety of tasks
- Are often impatient with long, slow jobs
- Are interested in the activities of their work, and in how other people do them
- Act quickly, sometimes without thinking
- Find phone calls a welcome diversion when working on a task
- Develop ideas by discussing them with others
- Like having people around and working on teams

Introversion:

- Like quiet and private space for concentration
- Tend to be comfortable working on one project for a long time without interruption
- Are interested in the facts and/or ideas behind their work
- Like to think before they act, sometimes to the point of not acting
- Find phone calls intrusive when concentrating on a task
- Develop ideas alone through reflection
- Like working by themselves or occasionally in small groups

Sensing:

- Like using experience and standard ways to solve problems
- Enjoy applying skills already perfected
- Seldom make errors of fact, but may ignore inspirations
- Like to do things with a practical bent
- Like to present the details of their work first
- Prefer continuation of what is, with fine tuning
- Proceed step-by-step or piece-by-piece, accurately estimating the time needed

Intuition:

- Like solving new, complex problems
- Enjoy the challenge of learning something new
- Seldom ignore insights, but may overlook facts
- Like to do things with an innovative bent
- Like to present an overview of their work first

- Prefer change, sometimes radical, to continuation of what is
- Proceed in burst of energy, following their inspirations as time goes by

Thinking:

- Use logical analysis to reach conclusions
- Can work without harmony, concentrating instead on the task
- Upset people inadvertently by overlooking their emotions
- Decide impersonally, sometimes paying insufficient attention to people's wishes
- Tend to be firm-minded and ready to offer critiques
- Look at the principles involved in the situation
- Want recognition after task requirements are met or exceeded

Feeling:

- Uses values to reach conclusions
- Work best in harmony with others, concentrating on the people
- Enjoy meeting people's needs, even in small matters
- Let decisions be influenced by their own and other people's likes and dislikes
- Are sympathetic and dislike, even avoid, telling people unpleasant things
- Look at the underlying values in the situation
- Want appreciation throughout the process of working on a task

Judging:

- Work best when they can plan their work and work their plan
- Enjoy organizing and finishing tasks
- Keep the focus on what needs to be completed, ignoring other things that come up
- Feel more comfortable once a decision has been made on a thing, situation or person
- Decide quickly in their desire for closure
- Seek structure and schedules
- Use lists to prompt action on specific tasks

Perceiving:

- Want flexibility in their work
- Enjoy starting tasks and leaving them open for last-minute changes
- Want to include as much as possible, thus deferring needed tasks
- Feel comfortable staying open to experiences, not wanting to miss anything
- Postpone decisions because of a search for options
- Adapt to changing situations and feel restricted with too much structure
- Use lists to remind them of possible things to do when time allows

There are also preferred methods of communication:

Extraversion:

- Communicate energy and enthusiasm
- Respond quickly without long pauses to think
- Converse about people, things and ideas in the external environment
- May need to moderate expression
- Seek opportunities to communicate with groups
- Prefer face-to-face over written communication, voice mail over e-mail
- In meetings, like talking out loud to build their ideas

Introversion:

- Keep energy and enthusiasm inside
- Pause and reflect before responding
- Thoroughly consider ideas, thoughts and impressions
- May need to be drawn out
- Seek opportunities to communicate one-to-one
- Prefer written over face-to-face communication, e-mail over voice mail
- In meetings, verbalize ideas that have been thought through

Sensing:

- Like evidence (facts, details and examples) presented first
- Want practical and realistic applications shown with any relationships between the facts clearly explained
- Rely on direct experience to provide information and anecdotes
- Use an orderly step-by-step approach in conversations
- Like suggestions to be straight forward and feasible
- Refer to specific examples
- In meetings, follow the agenda

Intuition:

- Like global schemes, with broad issues presented first
- Want to consider future possibilities and challenges
- Use insights and imagination as information and anecdotes
- Rely on a roundabout approach in conversations
- Like suggestions to be novel and unusual
- Refer to general concepts
- In meetings, use the agenda as a starting point

Thinking:

- Prefer to be brief and concise
- Want the pros and cons of each alternative to be listed
- Can be intellectually critical and objective
- Convinced by cool, impersonal reasoning
- Present goals and objectives first
- Use emotions and feelings as secondary data
- In meetings, seek involvement with the task first

Feeling:

- Prefer to be personable and in agreement
- Want to know an alternative's impact on people and values
- Can be interpersonally appreciative and accepting
- Convinced by personal authenticity
- Present points of agreement first
- Consider logic and objectivity as secondary data
- In meetings, seek involvement with people first

Judging:

- Want to agree on schedules, timetables and reasonable deadlines
- Dislike surprises and want advance warning
- Expect others to follow through and count on this
- State their positions and decisions as final
- Want to hear about results and achievements
- Focus on purpose and direction
- In meetings, concentrate on task completion

Perceiving:

- Willing to discuss timetables but resist tight deadlines and unchangeable schedules
- Enjoy surprises and adapt to last-minute changes
- Expect others to respond to situational requirements
- Present their views as tentative and modifiable
- Want to hear about options and opportunities
- Focus on autonomy and flexibility
- In meetings, concentrate on the process being used